

Doris Huestis Speirs Award

2013 – Dr. Tony Diamond

The Doris Huestis Speirs Award is the most prestigious award given by the SCO-SOC. The award is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions in Canadian ornithology. The D.H. Speirs Award Selection Committee has selected Tony Diamond, Research Professor, Atlantic Laboratory for Avian Research, University of New Brunswick, for the 2013 award.

Tony began his life's interest at a young age cycling about the English countryside with netting equipment, bamboo poles and a ringing permit. As a young man he worked on seabird colonies banding chicks before he realized that he could actually make a living at this enjoyable pastime. During his university years at Cambridge (B.A.), Aberdeen (M.Sc. and Ph.D.) and Oxford (post-doc), he was chosen to go on several expeditions to the Indian Ocean Islands where his love of work in the tropics began. As scientific administrator for two years on the Seychelles, he became skilled in running boats, educating tourists, and discouraging poaching. After this experience he took a lecturing position in Nairobi for 4 years, where he supervised students and developed some of the first courses on Kenyan animals, birds, and ecology.



In 1983 the Canadian Wildlife Service hired him to coordinate the Acid Rain Program; later he progressed to head of Migratory Bird Studies, then Chief of Ecological Research and Officer in Charge of the Prairies and Northern Wildlife. At that time he began supervising students again at the University of Saskatoon. After 10 years with the Canadian government, he moved to University of New Brunswick (UNB) to take a position as a research professor and senior chair of the Atlantic Canada Wildlife Research and Ecology Network (ACWERN) now restructured as the Atlantic Laboratory of Avian Research (ALAR).

Tony's interests focus broadly on evolution and ecology of tropical and temperate seabirds and Neotropical migrants in summer and winter. Since Tony began as a research professor at UNB in 1994, he has taught over 20 undergrad courses, and mentored over 30 undergraduate honours, 35 M.Sc., 14 Ph.D. students, and 3 postdoctoral fellows. All of these students have absorbed his obvious passion for birds, conservation and vast experience; and many have decided to join the field of ornithology as a result, and several now hold important positions in government, academia, and non-profit agencies. Tony has published over 126 peer-reviewed publications and co-authored 4 books on avian ecology, as well as the commissioned work "Save the Birds." He also led the production of the SCO's very first peer-reviewed publication "Biology and Conservation of Forest Birds."

In addition to his academic career, he has helped establish some of Canada's avian conservation and research groups. He had a key role in creating the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, and was the president from 1998-2000. He is a founding and life member of Birds Studies Canada (he even suggested its name). He is an elected member and fellow of the American Ornithologist Union, a councillor for the Waterbird Society (2001-2003) and a board member of the Nature Trust of New Brunswick.

Tony's contributions to ornithology in Canada are deep and wide-ranging. He has served as a senior science manager in the Canadian government, is a founder of Canadian institutions devoted to the science and conservation of birds, is an active conservationist and is a productive researcher studying Canadian marine and forest birds. This award will serve to acknowledge these outstanding contributions Tony has made to ornithology in Canada.